



## Islamic Thought and Civilization (JITC)

Volume 11 Issue 2, Fall 2021

ISSN<sub>P</sub>: 2075-0943, ISSN<sub>E</sub>: 2520-0313

Journal DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc>

Issue DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.11.2>

Homepage: <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/JITC>



Journal QR Code:

Article:

### Resurrection of the Self: A Comparative Thematic Study of Rumi's Selected Poems and Hesse's *Siddhartha*

Indexing

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Published:

Fall 2021

Article DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.11.2.20>



Shazia Parveen

QR Code:



Citation:

Parveen, Shazia., and Nadia Anwar. "Resurrection of the self: A comparative thematic study of Rumi's Selected Poems and Hesse's *Siddhartha*." *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 11, no. 2 (2021): 361–378.

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Publisher Information:

Department of Islamic Thought and Civilization, School of Social Science and Humanities, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan



# **Resurrection of the Self: A Comparative Thematic Study of Rumi's Selected Poems and Hesse's *Siddhartha***

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## **Abstract**

This research aims to trace a journey towards spiritual development by underscoring different stages which are essential for a mystic to cover a long distance of spiritual development and reach his/her goal, i.e. self-fulfillment, a higher state of a man's existence in which the Phenomenal Self immerses into the Divine Self. In order to chart out the stages of such a journey, this research does a thematic analysis of Hesse's masterpiece, *Siddhartha*, and Rumi's selected poems and draw parallels in the themes projected by both the writers. The objective of the study is to make inter-generic reading of the mystical texts and derive common features from them. The motive behind the selection of these texts is to highlight the phenomenon of resurrected self from two different perspectives i.e. Eastern Sufism and Western Mysticism and to merge them to propose a comprehensive perspective to understand the Divine. Taking inspiration from Fowler, we have categorized the spiritual journey into three stages which are labeled as The Childhood stage, The Adulthood stage and The Young stage.<sup>1</sup> At the first stage, a person remains focused on his/her selfish desires such as the desire to achieve reputation, honor and wealth which eventually leads him/her towards different recalcitrant feelings like jealousy, anger and hatred. At the second stage when a person becomes a little mature, s/he starts swimming against the current of naive attempts to attain happiness and struggles to find the eternal source of happiness and peace. At the third and the last stage, s/he achieves the ultimate source or truth of happiness and is considered as a divine source for others.

**Keywords:** Spiritual Development, Self - Resurrection, Self-fulfilment, Phenomenon-self, Divine Self, Sufism, Mysticism

## **Introduction**

The quest for self has always been a big concern for human beings. Because of this inherent inquisitiveness, they try to find out the answers of different questions and one such question pertains to a person's existence, his own self. A study conducted by social scientists from John Hopkins University revealed that 78 percent of the selected participant

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<sup>1</sup>James Fowler, *Stages of Faith* (America: Harper Collins Publisher, 1981), 121.

students struggled to seek the purpose and meaning of their lives.<sup>2</sup> This substantiates the inner human urge to connect with what resides within. Different people adopt different ways to reach the reality of their “Self.” Rumi and Hesse’s writing, the focus of this study, also deal with the quest to get answers about the existence and its multiple realities.

This study aims to explore Rumi and Hesse’s similar views about the “Self.” The researchers will attempt to prove that although both are from different backgrounds, cultures or societies, yet their mainstream ideas or beliefs are similar. The main idea of Rumi’s selected poems and Hesse’ *Siddhartha* (1951)<sup>3</sup> is the resurrection and purification of the “Self” or if put in interrogative, they seek to ask how “self-actualization” can be attained? Both highlight the importance of soul over body.

In this research paper, we have focused on the phenomenon of “Self” in Rumi’s and Hesse’s writings to prove that genre does not affect the nature of spirituality which go beyond the constraints of form. Rumi’s selected poems and Hesse’s *Siddhartha*, a fictional cum historical narrative, deal with similar ideas of self, soul and body, emptiness from all kinds of worldly desires, freedom from the deadly germs of “self”, and sense of oneness with the whole world. By highlighting their views about how human beings can access the purified self, we will categories this journey of resurrection of the self into three stages — The Childhood Stage, The Adulthood Stage and The Young Stage.

Both Rumi and Hesse philosophize their ideas. Their writing draws people’s attention from industrial civilization to “inner dream world.”<sup>4</sup> However, the main focus of their writings is to attain the universal state of the self which brings peace and harmony to people’s lives. With the help of their writings, they have tried to break the shell of illusion in which almost all human beings live and have provided them with a lens through which they can peep into their souls and the deepest layer of their self.

## 2. Situating Rumi’s and Hesse’s Spiritual and Philosophical Ideas

- Both Rumi and Hesse belong to different backgrounds, cultures and societies.

Mowlana Khodavandgar Jalal al-Din Mohammad, born Mohammad al-Balkhi al-Rumi, is known by his disciples with different names. His Persian-speaking disciples call him Khodavandgar, meaning “Lord” or “Master.” In Turkey, he is known as Mevlana and in the West he is known as Jalal al-Din Rumi.<sup>5</sup> There were different elements in his life which played a significant role in developing his spiritual disposition and shaping his writings. Qamber in his article “Essay: Rumi: mystic extraordinary” (2001/2002) explains that Rumi was born in Khorasan, in the historic city of Balkh which is still famous for its spiritual settings, complemented by Rumi’s glorious ancestral past trailing back to Hazrat

<sup>2</sup>Viktor E. Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 100.

<sup>3</sup>Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha* (Lahore: ILQA Publications, 2016).

<sup>4</sup>Ralph Freedman “Reviewed Work(s): Hermann Hesse: His Mind and Art by Mark Boulby,” *Contemporary Literature* 10, No.3 (1969): 421-426.

<sup>5</sup>Franklin D. Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West* (London: One world, 2016), 9-16.

Abu Bakr Saddiq and Hazrat Ali (*RA*). His father, Baha-ud-Din Muhammad Waled, and his grandfather, the renowned Sufis of their time, were famous for their “piety, virtue, learning and mystical learning.”<sup>6</sup> Rumi spent much time in his father’s company, listened to his lectures, sermons and attended public gatherings with him. His father groomed him to become his successor. Apart from getting the training of the soul through the Qur’ānic revelations, he learned much about Sufi path from his father. He was famous “among his father’s circle for spiritual insight” as well as met with different other enlightened men “through his father’s professional associations” who broadened his vision. One of those people was Sheikh Farid-ud-Din, “the most celebrated poet of the age” whose *Masnavi, Asrar Nameh* influenced Rumi throughout his life.

The most inspiring event in Rumi’s mystic life was his meeting with a wandering dervish, Shams-i-Tabriz (1185-1248). That meeting had a great influence on Rumi’s spiritual future or “awakened his mystic psyche,” ultimately facilitating him achieve his “inner or true self or spirit.”<sup>7</sup> Before the holy inclusion of Shams in his life, Rumi “practiced the ways of obedience and renunciation.” Shams brought a “spiritual metamorphosis”<sup>8</sup> which made him an eminent spiritual scholar of the world.

Unlike Rumi, Hesse was a self-made spiritual writer. His mother belonged to India with a “talented, sensitive, and spiritual” bearing. Although her background somehow influenced Hesse, yet he did not accept all the ideas as they were. His grandfather was a Hindu scholar who had assembled “dictionaries of Indian language.” Because of his Hindu background, Hesse was sent to monastic schools which were famous for theological studies and used to prepare students for the famous “theological universities in Tubingen.” Hesse rebelled against the “mechanical intellectual routine.” What Rumi inherited, Hesse struggled to find it with his intellect, i.e., a lust to find truth and harmony.<sup>9</sup>

As mentioned earlier, in Rumi’s life Shams-i-Tabriz played a crucial role in awakening the former’s “spiritual psyche.” Contrarily, Hesse became a spiritual thinker from the consequences of the First World War intensified by different family crises. In 1914 his youngest son got “stricken with cerebral meningitis”, and one year after that his father died.<sup>10</sup> His first wife also “succumbed to mental illness and was placed in institution.” At a more abstract level, Europe’s civilization appeared to Hesse as “hollow and tottering.”<sup>11</sup> With all that was happening inside and outside, he started questioning the pre-established ideas or beliefs. During the World War-I, he saw the victory of “machine civilization over

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<sup>6</sup>Akhtar Qamber, “Essay: Rumi: Mystic Extraordinary,” *India International Centre Quarterly* 28, No. 4 (2001/2002): 155.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 156.

<sup>8</sup>Franklin D. Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West*, 162.

<sup>9</sup>Gustav E. Mueller, “Hermann Hesse,” *Books Abroad* 21, No. 2 (1947): 146.

<sup>10</sup>Joseph K. Davis, “Resurrection of the Body: Apocalypse in Hermann Hesse and Norman O. Brown,” *Interpretations* 14, No. 2 (1983): 56.

<sup>11</sup>Gustav E. Mueller, “Hermann Hesse,” *Books Abroad* 21, No. 2 (1947): 148.

man,” which made him examine his beliefs and values. During the re-evaluation of his beliefs, he experienced a phenomenal transformation and “discovered a sense of unity in life.” Hesse understood that “the underlying purpose of human life is the realization of extended, higher levels of human consciousness” and only in this way an individual can “experience a fuller, deeper understanding of the nature and essential unity of all creation, including that of man himself.” In those hard times, he struggled to “defend the spirit” through his writing. That long period of questioning made him an “intellectual spiritual thinker.” His quest for meaning, intellectual mind and search for truth made him a great writer.<sup>12</sup>

- One is from the West and the other is from the East.

Both Rumi and Hesse were influenced by different philosophers. Rumi was a younger contemporary of Ibn-al-Arabi a “mystical theologian and philosopher” who is also considered “the greatest theoretician of Sufism.” Arabi’s Islamic spiritual teachings guided many of his successors.<sup>13</sup> Sheikh Farid-ud-Din Attar (1145-1221), who was an eminent poet of his age, had a great influence on Rumi. He gave a copy of his *Masnavi, Asrar Nameh* to Rumi which Rumi possessed throughout his life. He was also influenced by his teachers such as Burhan-ud-Din Muhaqqiq, who himself was a great mystic.<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand, Hesse was influenced by different western philosophers like Yang Chu, Hegel, and Nietzsche. Hesse and Yang Chu, a Chinese philosopher, both believed that if people overcome their desires of long life, fame, money, and rank, they can find “themselves.” Influence of Hegel’s philosophy can also be traced in Hesse’s *Siddhartha*. Hegel (1770-1831), a German Philosopher, was famous for presenting a dialectic stand point of reality, which he classified as thesis and antithesis, two contradictory situations which lead to synthesis. His philosophy deals with the fact that life is a combination of two opposite forces, i.e. spirit and nature, which are mandatory for the resurrection of the self. A person should accept this polarity in a positive way which will help him to find unity in the world.

Hegel’s theory played a crucial role in the development or evolution of Siddhartha’s personality as he was a son of a Brahman and used to live a privileged life. Disenchanted with his privileged lifestyle, he adopts a conflicting lifestyle by living with *Samanas* (The term *Samanas* refer to those pilgrims who practice self-denial through sufferings). He lives a life of beggars in which he does not care about his appearance or clothes. He experiences different extremes like “poverty and wealth, power and dependence before achieving self-

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 151.

<sup>13</sup>William C. Chittick, “The Spiritual Path of Love in Ibn al-Arabi and Rumi,” *Mystics Quarterly* 19, No.1 (1993): 5.

<sup>14</sup>Akhtar Qamber, “Essay: Rumi: mystic extraordinary,” *India International Centre Quarterly* 28, No. 4 (2001/2002): 155.

fulfillment.”<sup>15</sup> After passing through these phases, he finds his real self in which he experiences the eternal bliss.

Hesse was also influenced by Nietzsche, the great individualist, who considered individuality higher than any other reality and condemned “the greed and sheep like conformism” displayed by people. He also believed that human greatness depends upon his inner conflict and chaos. As Zarathustra says “one must have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star.” According to him a person should make his own rules and principles instead of following different norms of hierachal values. He puts great emphasis upon an individual’s freedom to reach the true understanding of his self. For him, a person’s quest requires “unlimited freedom to carry out vital experiment.”<sup>16</sup> Hesse’s individualist characters like Siddhartha and Knechshow were greatly influenced by Nietzschean philosophy.

- It is an inter-generic comparative research between a few selected poems of Rumi and Hesse’s novel, *Siddhartha*.

The study aims to prove that genre does not play any specific role while doing thematic analysis of certain texts. Genres are characterized by different attributes, sometimes with porous boundaries. Mostly genres are categorized on the basis of style, structure, settings or themes. In this study, we have tried to prove that it is difficult to differentiate genres on the basis of their themes as David Bordwell states, “any theme may appear in any genre.” That is why it is also believed that genres are abstract concepts which can be reconstructed by analysts.<sup>17</sup> Although it is a comparison between Rumi’s poetry and Hesse’s novel, *Siddhartha*, a few spiritual themes like purification of self or self-fulfillment are the same in both writers’ works. Moreover, since spiritualism cannot be contained in boundaries, restrictions of genre may also appear irrelevant for such an analysis.

- Both works are the translations of the original text.

Hesse’s *Siddhartha* has been written in German language and translated into English. In the same way, Rumi’s poetry has been written in Persian language and translated into different languages. In this study, we will use English translation of these works. It cannot be ignored that the cultures of different nations have a great significance in their language which cannot be revealed in translation or in other words translations only partially emulate various facets of the original texts. It is difficult to preserve the cultural assumptions, imagery and complexity of the original. Sometimes, translations into other languages cannot do justice to poet’s scholarly cribs and distort the phenomenon the author wishes to

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<sup>15</sup>Lawrence Wilde, “The Radical Appeal of Hermann Hesse’s Alternative Community,” *Utopian Studies* 10, No.1 (1999): 87.

<sup>16</sup>Sebastian Gardner, “Nietzsche, the Self, and the Disunity of Philosophical Reason,” (2009): 26, Doi, 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199231560.001.0001

<sup>17</sup>Daniel Chandler, *An Introduction to Genre Theory* (1997): 2,  
[https://faculty.washington.edu/farkas/HCDE510-all2012/Chandler\\_genre\\_theoryDFAnn.pdf](https://faculty.washington.edu/farkas/HCDE510-all2012/Chandler_genre_theoryDFAnn.pdf)

communicate. On the other hand, poetic translation is a subjective task in which the translator renders the “given poet’s individuality in a perceptible way.”<sup>18</sup> Kabir Helminski also presents the same idea by arguing that different translators of Rumi’s poetry have recreated Rumi according to their own stereotypical understanding of the mystic.

In this paper we have used *The Rumi Collection* as a primary text which is edited by Kabir Helminski who has gathered samples of Rumi’s renderings of nine different English translations and imitators. While acknowledging Helminski’s basic knowledge of Persian, Lewis in his book *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West* observes that Helminski consulted “scholarly versions in English and then cross-checked those translations directly with the original Persian.” So, his translations are considered to be closer to the original Persian. Apart from that, we have taken a general idea of “self” that lies beyond linguistic dimensions that helps us to extract important aspects of spirituality even from translation.

- Time period of both the writers is different from each other.

Maulana Jalal-ud-Din Muhammad, who was later known as Maulana-i-Rum or simply Rumi, was born in 1207 in Khorasan, the north eastern province of greater Iran. He lived from 1228-1273 in Anatolia, which is now Turkey. After Rumi, his territory was expanded by his disciples and offspring which “soon became hereditary.” His son found new branches and centers in *Meveleviyah Tariqah*, which gained popularity among the Turk rulers because of the association Rumi’s family had with the Seljuq rulers. It inspired a large community of “mystic belonging” as it was based on different spiritual teachings of Rumi and Shams which helped people to elevate their souls through different spiritual practices. That is why people directed their attentions towards this Spiritual discipline for enlightenment. This Sufi order got accepted even in European provinces and different other countries like Iran, Egypt and India. Equally revered by the followers of different religions, Rumi is called the poet of all ages because his divine messages of love, humanity and self-purification are universal in nature and are free from any bias in terms of caste, color or creed. In Qonya, Rumi’s tomb remains the focal point of the *Zawiyah* (Turkish name for a Khanqah) and different people belonging to different communities visit it.<sup>19</sup>

Hesse was born on July 2, 1877 in Calw, Wuttemberg, Germany. He was also blessed with a gifted intellect. Freedman has talked about Hesse’s mind and art represented by Canadian author Mark Boulby. In his article, Freedman has asserted that Hesse’s writing has a great contribution in “Literary tradition of his time.”<sup>20</sup> He observed that Hesse not only had a great influence upon people of his time, he is still appreciated by readers for his intellectual force and his unique style. However, Hess’s influence or the outreach of his philosophy cannot be compared with Rumi’s. The later occupies a grand stature as a

<sup>18</sup>Franklin D. Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West*, 605.

<sup>19</sup>Akhtar Qamber, “Essay: Rumi: Mystic Extraordinary,” *India International Centre Quarterly* 28, No. 4 (2001/2002): 116.

<sup>20</sup>Ralph Freedman, “Reviewed Work(s): Hermann Hesse: His Mind and Art by Mark Boulby,” *Contemporary Literature* 10, No. 3 (1969): 24.

religious and mystic figure. E.G. Browne called Rumi “without doubt the most eminent Sufi poet whom Persia has produced, while his mystical *Mathnawi* deserves to rank amongst the great poems of all time.”<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, it will be interesting to see how figures from two different spatio-temporal domains and statures can have similar view of spiritual matters and how their struggle to achieve the resurrected self and human understanding relate to each other.

## 2. Text Selection

The primary texts selected purposively to achieve the objectives are Hesse’s *Siddhartha* and six selected poems of Rumi “The Sifter of Dust,” “The Quest,” “No Above or Below,” “Muhammad and the Sick Companion,” “Emptiness” and “The Empty Heart” which deal with the idea of the resurrection of the self and self-purification.<sup>22</sup> Apart from these, we have also cross-referenced other poems by Rumi.

## 3. Overview of the Novel

The novel revolves around the story of a son of rich Brahman who was living a privileged life when one day he realized the meaninglessness and emptiness of his life. Earlier, he was serving God with devotion but his religious practices could not bring him closer to God. Suddenly he realized that he wanted to find God who earlier had been a vague idea for him. For this purpose, he left behind his social position and comfort and joined Samanas, a group of people who were practicing self-denial. He also experienced suffering by fasting and exposing his body to the burning rays of the sun. Later, he even left the company of Samanas and decided to learn through his own experiences. He started looking and perceiving the world differently which appeared to have an inherent beauty of its own. Hence, he decided to leave the wilderness and moved to a city where he found Kamala, the courtesan. He learned the ways of the world from her and discarded his beggar’s clothes and became a successful merchant in a very short time. Even then he remained unable to satisfy the thirst of his soul. He again cut himself off from the privileged life and went back to the river which he had crossed earlier when he had left his life with Samanas. At the bank of the river, while looking and talking to it, he reviewed his whole life and realized that even the evil things which he had done were important for his understanding of what life really was. Later, after the death of Kamala, he found his son who was not willing to live his life in a mundane way at the bank of the river. After the separation of his son, Siddhartha found nothing which could bind him to the world. He

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<sup>21</sup>Franklin D. Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West*, 563.

<sup>22</sup>Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Rumi Collection*, ed. Kabir Helminski (China: Shambhala Publications, 1998).

overcame his suffering and entered *Nirvana* (A state when a person overcomes his sufferings).<sup>23</sup>

In the following part, we have discussed Rumi and Hesse's ideas about self-fulfillment under the umbrella of Fowler's theory of faith development. Three stages of faith development are as follows:

#### **4. Analysis I: The Childhood Stage**

A person is a child in spiritual sense if he<sup>24</sup> pursues worldly desires, or he is very passionate about achieving his dreams or desires. At this stage his own personality remains as the centre of his attention due to which we may call him a child or an immature being who is still in the process of spiritual development. This stage has been critiqued by many Sufis such as Inayat Khan, Abdur Rahman and Syed Abdullah Shah Qadri.

Different characters in Hesse's *Siddhartha* also represent this stage. First, Siddhartha's eleven years old son did not like his father's and his father's friend Vasudeva's life style who lived a very mundane life at the bank of a river. He badly wanted to go back to his previous life in which he had the privilege of a rich life style. When he had to leave that way of life after his mother's death, he behaved in a very strange and arrogant manner while also humiliating his father.

Further, Siddhartha called people of his surrounding "childlike" who were running after worldly or materialistic desires or worried about their business, crafts, etc. They were in love with different material realities like money, honor, plans and hopes. They were bound in the circle of their own self, their children and women; still they were not contented with their life style. They even insulted each other over petty things or complained and moaned about their sufferings or pains. Kamaswami's character exemplified this kind of behavior. Siddhartha considered himself spiritually immature or child-like during his engagements in worldly pleasures like lust, riches and power over his servants. He regretted about that time which he had spent with dancing girls and wine. He even used to feel himself superior to others on the basis of his spirituality, wisdom and caste. At that time, he felt trapped and distanced from his goal towards achieving eternal bliss. When he became mature in spiritual sense, he used to feel nuisance while remembering his earlier life. That time seemed to him as if he had spent it in an "upholstered hell", even new clothes

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<sup>23</sup>Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha* (Lahore: ILQA Publications, 2016).

<sup>24</sup>The male pronoun 'he' is used in a generalized sense for a person of any gender. The same pattern will be retained throughout this paper since the authors strongly believe that spirituality is not restricted to any one gender.

became nuisance to him. Gotama<sup>25</sup> also forbade his disciples to tie “their hearts in love to earthly things” to gain spiritual enlightenment.<sup>26</sup>

Rumi also negated worldly desires in order to achieve the third stage that is about self-fulfillment. He also considered those people children who worshipped this world and remained enslaved in the prison of greed, lust and rank. In his view, people’s struggle for reputation and wealth is like children’s love for their toys. He narrates:

Don’t listen to what your body craves  
Take your counsel elsewhere  
If you don’t wish to end in regret (38-40).<sup>27</sup>

Rumi’s poetry teaches to avoid worldly or carnal desires of earthly body because they trap a person in this materialistic world. All these desires obstruct a person’s way to the higher stages of *Nafs* where his elevated *Nafs* helps him to find connections with the Divine.

Rumi further says in his poem “Muhammad and the Sick Companion”:  
Better to be ignorant of worldly concerns,  
better to be mad and to flee from self-interest,  
better to drink poison and spill the water of life,  
better to revile those who praise you,  
and lend both the capital and the interest to the poor,  
forgo safety and make a home in danger.  
Sacrifice your reputation and become notorious (71-78).<sup>28</sup>

Rumi does not appreciate worldly concerns because those concerns make a person’s life limited, making him keep running after them and denying him the charm of a complete and fuller life. He narrates in his poem “Mistaking the Lightning for the Sun”:

This bodily world is deceptive except for one who has escaped desire (51-52).<sup>29</sup>

According to Rumi, in the first stage of faith or spiritual development, a person worships everything but God. At the second stage, when he starts perceiving things at a deeper level, he leaves everything behind and worships only God. At the third level, when he removes the thick veil of ego from his eyes, he becomes silent. He does not claim

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<sup>25</sup>In this novel, *Siddhartha*, Gotama has been presented as an enlightened teacher who had gained the ultimate truth of life. While in Indian mythology, the figure of Gotama refers to Siddharta, the Buddha who had left his home to attain enlightenment.

<sup>26</sup>Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha* (Lahore: ILQA Publications, 2016), 136.

<sup>27</sup>Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Rumi Collection*, ed. Kabir Helminski (China: Shambhala Publications, 1998), 175.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 176.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 64.

anything, either he worships God or not. This last stage points towards the state of unification in which the heart dissolves in the love of God.

Comparative Thematic Analysis of both Hesse's *Siddhartha* and Rumi's selected poems shows that both Rumi and Hesse have used similar patterns to describe the first stage of Spirituality. Some of the similar patterns are given in table 1.

Table 1. The childhood stage

Rumi	Hesse
“This bodily world is deceptive” (Code-I: World of deception)	“His mouth twitched with contempt, when he walked through a city of nicely dressed people” (Code-I: Contempt for world)
“Better to be ignorant of worldly concerns” (Code-II: ignorance)	“It was the self, I wanted to free myself” (Code-II: freedom)
“Don’t listen to what your body craves” (Code-III: leaving of desires)	Siddhartha wanted to be “empty of thirst, empty of wishing” (Code-III: emptying)
Theme: Resentment for superficial realities	Theme: Urge to come out of materialistic trap

## 5. Analysis II: The Adulthood Stage

In this stage a person starts questioning his surroundings or shows his dissatisfaction with different pre-established ideas. It shows his progression from childhood to adulthood in spiritual sense. At this stage, he tries to make new ideas while negating the older and traditional ones. His whole life gets shattered at this point.

Siddhartha was also at this stage when he started questioning everything or stopped believing in things blindly. When the novel begins, the protagonist is shown dissatisfied with his life and thinks that something is missing and that restlessness of his soul makes him question not only his own existence but also God's existence. He thought “Was it meaningful and the highest occupation to make offerings to the gods.” He craves for a state of blissfulness or self-fulfillment and “Pristine source in one's own self.”<sup>30</sup> He had met many wise and holy men in his life still he had not found anyone who could quench his thirst completely except Gotama. In that quest, he decided to leave his home and join *Samanas*. However, he remained unsatisfied even in the company of *Samanas* and decided to leave them. He respected Gotama who was the wisest man among *Samanas* and had achieved that final state of blissfulness he sought, yet Siddhartha took leave from his teachings because even he could not satisfy the hunger of his soul. He believed that knowledge could not be learned but experienced. He wanted to peel off all the layers enwrapping the ‘self’ to find the core which was connected with the divine or the ultimate

<sup>30</sup>Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*, 5-7.

reality. Govinda, Siddhartha's friend, was also on a journey to find the ultimate truth of the world. He told Siddhartha that he would never stop searching because he considered his quest as his destiny. In mysticism, searching or traveling on the path of spiritual enlightenment is not uncommon. Mystics consider their search as their destiny.

According to Rumi, true meaning or significance of things should be discovered and we should try to reach the essence of everything.<sup>31</sup> For him, quest is the ultimate destiny for the seekers. Hence, a person should not stop his search at any cost. Rumi appreciates this stage of spiritual quest because it is very crucial for the last stage which is metaphorically called as young (mature) age. We perceive every phenomenon through knowledge which kills our ignorance. According to Rumi, when we question different things and get knowledge about their mystery, only then we can reach the true meaning or the interior layers of a certain reality or we can find the ultimate truth or become closer to God. Rumi does not want us to restrict ourselves within ego boundary. In his view, a person should not limit his thinking in fixed parameters of forms and shapes that make it difficult for him to understand the divine truth. He should look beyond those forms and shapes through his spiritual eyes. His poem "Sifter of Dust" deals with the same idea. He narrates:

Suppose you know the definition  
of all substances and their products,  
what good is this to you?  
Know the true definition of yourself.  
That is essential.  
Then, when you know your own definition, flee from it,  
that you may attain to the One who cannot be defined,  
O sifter of the dust (1-10).<sup>32</sup>

In Rumi's view, a person who knows the definition of all the objects, even then his knowledge is of no use if he does not know the limits and value of his own self. A person should not spend his whole life while dealing or discovering useless matters. He should focus on purifying the soul by discovering his own self. He should get knowledge about his shortcomings or faults and struggle to avoid them. After discovering his self and working on his shortcomings or limits, he should run from those limits so that he may become the one who has no definition. Rumi believes that if a person knows himself, it is enough for him because nothing exists outside of him. He should come out of the terms/bounds of time, space and language which confine him. His main focus should be self-discovery, only then he can find God. Rumi in his poem "Travel" narrates:

Journey forth from your own self

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<sup>31</sup>Franklin D. Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West*, 417.

<sup>32</sup>Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Rumi Collection*, ed. Kabir Helminski (China: Shambhala Publications, 1998), 197.

to God's self – voyage without end (36-37).<sup>33</sup>

Dowlatshah speculates Shams' views about knowledge which shams quoted from Sana I's Divan:

Knowledge that takes you not beyond yourself  
such knowledge is far worse than ignorance.<sup>34</sup>

Rumi further says in his poem "Ramadan":  
Break out of your shell that your wings may grow  
Let yourself fly (15-16).<sup>35</sup>

He considers the person lucky who succeeds in knowing his self.

Table 2. The adulthood stage

Rumi	Hesse
"Even though you're not equipped, keep searching" (Code-I: continuous search)	"I always thirst for knowledge, I have always been full of questions" (Code-I: thirst to find answers)
"Know the true definition of yourself, That is essential" (Code-II: definition of self)	"I want to learn from myself, want to be my student" (Code-II: self-learning)
"Break out of your shell that your wings may grow" (Code-III: breaking free)	"I was willing to dissect myself and peel off all of its layers" (Willingness to dissect the self)
Theme: Quest to know the real Self	Theme: Curiosity to know the inner self

Again, similar patterns can be seen in Rumi and Hesse's writing about the quest for self-knowledge.<sup>36</sup> They both encourage others to take the path of self-learning and to struggle to become aware of their higher self.

### 6. Analysis III: The Young (Mature) Stage

The last and third stage is the most important among all the stages which remains a goal for mystic entities. This stage is about the resurrection of the universal or higher self or harmony and peace in human being's lives. At this stage, a person becomes an epitome of enlightenment and peace. He reaches the higher stages of his *Nafs* and conquers his ego. He finds unity in the whole world. At this point, he desires no more of the world. He finds beauty or divinity in everything and reaches the pinnacles of faith. Hazrat Inayat Khan also calls a person grown up in spiritual sense who starts working on his inner life and does not indulge in worldly activities.

<sup>33</sup>Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Rumi Collection*, ed. Kabir Helminski, 69.

<sup>34</sup>Franklin D. Lewis, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West*, 161.

<sup>35</sup>Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Rumi Collection*, ed. Kabir Helminski, 73.

<sup>36</sup>Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*; Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Rumi Collection*.

In *Siddhartha*, a few characters succeed in reaching this stage. Gotama, the teacher of many Samanas, was one of those characters who had achieved his goal of perfection or enlightenment. His whole personality was a mouthpiece of tamed spirit. His hands, fingers, feet, shoulders, glance or voice expressed calmness and perfection. Vasudeva's personality also crossed the trivialities of emotions such as judgment, passion, wish or opinion. He had different adorable qualities like patience, silence and calmness. His eyes revealed his enlightened state of being. He was far from the materialistic realities of the world and used to speak to river. River plays a great role in this text because in spirituality rivers are signified as a purifier, a meditative medium and as a source of power and strength. It is considered that river has the power to regenerate the "spirit into its purest form."<sup>37</sup> In different religions water is symbolized as the origin and end of life, so river also signifies a person's spiritual renewal.

At the end of the novel, Siddhartha also found self-fulfillment for which he was struggling throughout his life. At that stage, he found beauty in everything and eternity in every moment. His personality attained calmness and purity which was apparent from every part of his body. Desires and thoughts of worldly people whom he used to call "Childlike" did not bother him anymore.<sup>38</sup> He was able to love them all with all their differences. All these qualities can be found at the third and last stage of spirituality where a grown-up person, who have not experienced that inner journey, does not feel himself superior to other people. Rather he feels joy in their company same as parents happily participate in the childlike games of their children. He neither considers their ideas petty nor regard his ideas more advanced than others. The more a person advances in his journey, humbler and less arrogant he becomes.<sup>39</sup> Ultimately, he finds unity in the world and "oneness of all life." At that stage, Siddhartha was also able to find the "eternal perfection of the world." He believed that everything belonged together and, in that togetherness, and oneness laid the music of life. He felt "indestructibility of every life, the eternity of every moment." It seems as if a person comes out from the darkness into light at that stage. Siddhartha considered his awakening period as the birth of his "New Self" or it seemed to him as "a new Siddhartha had woken up from the sleep."<sup>40</sup>

Rumi also shared the same views about the third stage of enlightenment. His poem "No "above" or "below" beautifully describes the third stage of spiritual development. He states in that poem:

The really holy never need to be honored; their  
Selves are already honored by Love.

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<sup>37</sup>Michael Blackstone, "Water: A First Nations' Spiritual and Ecological Perspective," *BC Journal of Ecosystems and Management*, Vol.1 No. 1 (2001): 5.

<sup>38</sup>Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*, 40.

<sup>39</sup>Inayat Khan, *The Inner Life*, 13.

<sup>40</sup>Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*, 88.

The real holy ones who are put in high positions  
 Are like the lamp and the sun—they do not care  
 About “high” or “low”, “above” or “below”, and do  
 Not look to be revered by others.

.....

No categories of any kind chain or even  
 Interest them; all their glorying is in God (1-2, 13-16, 29-30).<sup>41</sup>

All the attributes and characteristics of the third stage can be seen in this poem. Rumi beautifully explains that the searcher of God or divine truth itself becomes a lamp for others and brings brightness in other's lives. A person spiritually elevated thus does not care about the worldly titles, status and ranks. Rumi compares those mystics with sun whose light cannot be compressed; either it is set “above” or “below.” According to Rumi, at the stage of fulfillment even the evil desires turn into golden or precious feelings. He narrates in his poem “Muhammad and the Sick Companion”:

For God's sake, your lust has turned to purity;  
 Your greed has turned to unselfishness,  
 and the thorns of envy have become roses.

You turned your own fiery soul into an orchard where the nightingales of remembrance could sing,

as if in a garden by the riverside.  
 Because you have brought water  
 into the blazing fire of your soul,  
 Hell has become a rose garden to you (174-184).<sup>42</sup>

When a person destroys his self for God's sake, he experiences mystical drunkenness. The hellish fire of his desires turns into divine wine. The more a person lessens his greed, the higher he climbs on in terms of spirituality. When a person empties the jar of his selfhood for God's sake, God fills it with spiritual riches and the rain of God's mercy falls upon that person. In Rumi's view, when a person sacrifices his ego, riches and life to find spiritual blissfulness; God rewards him with eternal life and the spiritual kingdom which he has been longing for. The jungle of different vices like envy, greed and jealousy turn into a garden of purity (Eden), generosity, and kind heartedness. Everything he presents in the way of God return in much better form. When he stops running after physical achievements and focus on his spiritual improvements, paradise blossoms in his heart.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup>Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Rumi Collection*, ed. Kabir Helminski, 186.

<sup>42</sup>Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Rumi Collection*, ed. Kabir Helminski (China: Shambhala Publications, 1998), 179.

<sup>43</sup>Dr. Erkan Turkmen, *The Essence of Rumi's Masnevi* (Lahore: Shanakht Press, 2005), 223-225.

Hesse's Siddhartha also finds spiritual blissfulness after leaving his only son and glittering world behind.

Table 3. The young stage

Rumi	Hesse
"For God's sake, your lust has turned to purity" (Code-I: purity)	Siddhartha finds "eternal perfection of the world" (Code-I: perfection)
"And the thorns of envy have become roses"	He finds "indestructibility of every life, the eternity of every moment" (Code-II: perennialism)
(Code-II: transformation)	
Theme: Eternal Bliss	Theme: Eternal Bliss

Both Rumi and Hesse use the similar patterns about the third stage as well where the seeker finds a perfect inner blissfulness.

## 7. Conclusion

It can be concluded in the light of above mentioned stages of spiritual development that a veil lies upon a person's eyes which starts becoming thin with the passage of time. Eventually, this veil is erased from a mystic or searcher's eyes and he can easily see the divine realities everywhere. It is the creative power of a mind which enables a mystic to create a meta-physical reality which other people cannot apprehend. They create their own subjective world in which they perceive different realities of the world in spiritual sense.

Rumi and Hesse have also tried to show a different picture of life, through their writings, where they find divine beauty everywhere and in everything. They have made an attempt to show a different approach to human beings through which they can break the circle of their sufferings or worries and can find peace. They have conveyed these ideas in a different way: Rumi through his poetry and Hesse through his novel *Siddhartha*. Still we can see that their ultimate message or goal is the same since the essence of everything is the same. At this darkest hour, their writings convey the importance of lost innocence and purity. In Norton's views, "Hesse believed that human transformation would require spiritual reorientation rather than blind reliance on technological development and political systems."<sup>44</sup>

Nussbaum assumed that literature plays a significant role in moral development and ethical understanding because, while reading or interpreting different literary texts, we develop a kind of sympathetic reasoning which is linked with morality. Hence, there is a need to excavate and engage with these texts today because they can work "as a tool for

<sup>44</sup>Peter Roberts, *From West to East and Back Again* (The Netherlands: Sense Publications), 63.

the cultivation of virtue.”<sup>45</sup> Roberts also states that we should revisit Herman Hesse’s novels for educational interests. For Freire, Education “is a process of both knowing and being” which is ultimately connected with the process of humanization. Hesse’s novels are replete with this kind of education. Hesse’s *Siddhartha* does not only play a significant role in the spiritual development of the central character of the novel but in the spiritual growth of the reader as well. Such spiritual texts educate people to attain self-understanding and attain an insight which is the need of the present time, especially during the pandemic.

Rumi’s poetry also promotes a very optimistic and positive attitude in these chaotic times. The prevalence of materialism and political uncertainty requires an understanding of the divine message of Rumi’s poetry that “desperately needs to be heard.” Halman considers Rumi’s brand of Sufism as “the free spirit of Islam.”<sup>46</sup> Today, when Islam is being considered synonymous with terrorism, it is Rumi’s poetry that imparts the message of the holy Qur’ān by promoting and presenting God as an embodiment of love and affection. Rumi embraces all cultures, religions and nationalities which has made his poetry universal in its appeal.

Rumi through his poetry and Hesse through his novel, *Siddhartha* have made an attempt to save humanity from its disastrous future by turning their attention toward their own “self” and moral and ethical values. Through thematic analysis, we have derived different codes from Rumi’s selected poems and Hesse’s *Siddhartha* like world of deception, contempt for world, ignorance, freedom, leaving of desires, emptying, continuous search, thirst to find answers, definition of self, self-learning, breaking free, curiosity to know the inner self, purity, perfection, transformation, and perennialism which have been found at different stages of spiritual development and deal with themes related to the resentment of superficial realities, urge to come out of the trap of materialistic world, quest to know the inner self and Eternal Bliss which are similar in both Eastern Sufism and Western Mysticism.

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>46</sup>“Saturday Review: Lives and letters: West goes round...: The Popularity in the US of Rumi, a 13th- century Turkish poet, is a tragic irony, as the order of Sufi dervishes he founded is banned at home,” *Guardian* (2005): 21.

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